

# Remote Work Guidelines

Agencies determine the methods, means, and personnel to conduct operations. Agencies have sole discretion to identify positions suitable for remote work and authorize requests to work remotely. Approval depends on operational needs, including the suitability of duties, skills and abilities of employees and supervisors, and availability of necessary equipment. Remote work can provide flexibility to meet customer, employee, and business needs and enhance delivery of services.

There are two ways to secure a remote work arrangement:

1. An eligible employee may submit a Remote Work Agreement request to the agency.
2. Agencies may designate remote work as the primary work location for an employee through an executed Remote Work Agreement.

## **Equipment, Hardware, Software, Utilities, and Materials**

1. Agencies determine the business functions needed for remote workers to complete their jobs. The Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB) will establish IT hardware, software, network connections, and security considerations to standardize remote work capabilities for employees.
2. Agencies may provide, at their sole discretion, computer hardware, network connections, and security as determined by the assessment of DTMB. Employees must take appropriate steps to minimize damage to state-owned equipment. Agencies are responsible for insuring state-owned equipment.
3. Agencies cannot authorize remote workers to use employee-owned computer equipment, software, and other devices to perform assigned work away from the state work location. All SOM employees and contractors are required to adhere to the Technical Standard for Acceptable Use of Information Technology (1340.00.130.02) which includes devices, networks, data, software, email, and system accounts. Requests for exception to this policy must follow the Technical Standard for Technical Policy and Product Exception Standard (1305.00.02).
4. Employees cannot use employee-owned PCs to access sensitive data or place sensitive data on employee-owned storage media. Accessing sensitive data must be performed using state equipment.
5. DTMB is responsible for installing, testing, maintaining, updating, and repairing equipment and software for state issued equipment. All such activities must be performed at the state offices unless otherwise authorized. DTMB will not generally perform such activities at employees' homes. The employee shall follow agency protocols on services from the State of Michigan Client Service Center.
6. Equipment, hardware, software, and other devices furnished by the employer remain state property and subject to agency work rules limiting personal use. Agencies shall maintain records documenting what state property has been designated for remote work. State-owned software must not be installed on employee-owned hardware. Employee-owned software must not be installed on state hardware.
7. Remote workers will return state hardware, software, supplies, documents, and other information or property to the state work location before ending the Remote Work Agreement or employment.

8. Remote workers must promptly notify the employer of an equipment malfunction or failure of either state- or employee-owned equipment. If a malfunction prevents the worker from performing assigned tasks, the worker must notify the employer immediately. The worker will be directed to perform other assignments, assist with the repair or exchange of equipment, or return to the state work location.
9. Agencies are responsible for determining the telephone and broadband requirements to perform work. Employees must establish and provide at their own expense remote work environments that have high-speed internet access (commercial cable or wireless broadband with minimum speeds of 25 Mbps download and 5 Mbps upload), suitable lighting and furniture, and other utilities.
10. Agencies will inform employees of SOM and agency privacy and security requirements for remote work, including necessary equipment, use of VPNs, and other encrypted communications.
11. Remote workers must ensure that updates are timely made to hardware and software, consistent with DTMB policies.

### **Work Rules**

Agency policies and work rules applicable to state offices also apply to remote-work locations and failure to comply may result in discipline or ending a remote-work arrangement.

### **Work Plan**

Agencies are responsible for ensuring that supervisors establish and explain a work plan for employees working remotely that sets performance expectations, communication procedures, and privacy and security requirements during the remote-work assignment. Supervisors and employees shall certify that the remote-work plan has been discussed in the Remote Work Agreement. Documentation and explanation of expectations must also be memorialized in the annual-rating process for continuing remote work.

### **Fiscal Responsibilities**

Agencies are responsible for managing the costs associated to remote work in their allocated budget. Supplies and eligible employee reimbursement must be identified in the Remote Work Agreement and cannot conflict with Standardized Travel Regulations, state vehicle use policies and procedures, procurement policies and procedures, or any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Employees with authorized remote-work arrangements are not eligible for reimbursement for (1) travel between a remote work location and the work location where the employee would normally work absent a Remote Work Agreement or (2) meals or lodging purchased within the agency-defined remote-work location or work location where the employee would normally work absent a Remote Work Agreement.

### **Tax Laws**

Federal, state, and local tax obligations resulting from remote work are the responsibility of the employee.

### **Remote-Work Location**

Remote work from a location outside Michigan requires the prior written approval of the Office of the State Employer. Previously established out-of-state employees may continue to work remotely but should enter a Remote Work Agreement memorializing their status. Note: State computers and devices are not authorized for use outside the United States and Canada—whether for short-term, occasional use on vacation or longer-term, remote work. Any employee seeking to use state IT equipment outside the United States or Canada will also need to obtain prior approval and alternate equipment from the DTMB.

## **Cancellation**

Agencies may cancel a Remote Work Agreement anytime upon written notice to the employee. An employee may rescind an approved request to work remotely in writing anytime to the agency. If feasible, two weeks' notice should be given.

## **Modification**

Amendment, modification, or extension of a Remote Work Agreement can be made anytime with written agreement between the agency and employee.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Denial of a request to work remotely and cancellation of a Remote Work Agreement are not considered discipline nor grounds for a grievance.

## **Work Schedules**

1. The supervisor and employee will determine which days and hours during the pay period that the employee can work remotely. The agency must review the schedule and approve, modify, or deny the request.
2. Absent other arrangements, the employee is expected to attend all assigned meetings remotely or in person. No work-related meetings will be conducted in the remote worker's home or other non-state owned or leased locations without the agency's approval. Agencies may establish standards for virtual meeting protocol.
3. An employee scheduled to work remotely on a day when the state work location is declared closed or inaccessible is expected to work remotely. An employee with a Remote Work Agreement who is scheduled to work from the state work location on a day when it is declared closed or inaccessible is expected to work remotely.
4. If an equipment failure or power outage occurs at the remote work location, the employee must report for work at the state workstation unless the supervisor authorizes otherwise.
5. An employee is to perform only official duties and not conduct personal business while on work status at the remote work location. Personal business includes caring for dependents and performing other personal or home duties.
6. Remote workers must comply with agency requirements and applicable collective bargaining agreements on illness and absence reporting and the use of leave credits.

## **Health and Safety**

Remote work locations are considered extensions of state workspace during scheduled remote-work hours. In the Remote Work Agreement, employees must certify that remote workspaces comply with, at a minimum, the following Remote Work Health and Safety Standards:

- All reporting requirements for injury or illness extend to the remote work location.
- Home locations must accommodate any state equipment used in performing work and due diligence and care will be exercised in the use and maintenance of equipment.
- Heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting are adequate for satisfactory work performance.
- Electrical equipment is free of recognizable hazards and grounded.
- Walkways, doorways, and corners are free of obstructions that interfere with visibility or movement.
- File cabinets and other storage devices are arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways.

- Work chairs are structurally sound and floors are free of conditions that could cause trips or falls.
- Electrical cords, telephone lines, and equipment cables are secured and do not interfere with foot traffic.
- The state may inspect home locations during remote work hours, with reasonable advance notice, to ensure ongoing compliance with Remote Work Agreements.
- Non-compliance with Remote Work Health and Safety Standards is grounds to end authorization for remote work.